

**Remarks by the Honorable Frederick Gregory
NASA Deputy Administrator
Al Diaz Hispanic Engineer of the Year Honor
September 9, 2005**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I'm Fred Gregory, NASA's Deputy Administrator.

More to the point, I am delighted to add my voice to these festive proceedings in praise of Hispanic Engineer of the Year Al Diaz.

At NASA we take seriously the need to inspire that next generation of engineers, scientists and astronauts to help us carry the torch of exploration to new heights.

And Al Diaz, through a career of tremendous distinction, has served as an outstanding role model for the bright young Hispanic engineers who we're going to count on to help us extend the reach of human civilization to the moon, Mars and beyond.

Some day in the near future, an American astronaut, perhaps one of your outstanding student award recipient, will be exploring the surface of Mars and come across the Viking lander.

This is the first spacecraft NASA landed on our neighboring planet during America's bicentennial year.

And at this site this future explorer will find the GAS Chromatograph Mass Spectrometer, the first scientific instrument to analyze the Martian surface, an instrument developed by Al Diaz.

There may also be a future astronomer in your audience who will help develop a large space telescope capable of viewing the atmosphere on a planet orbiting a distant star. That astronomer will be building on the legacy of Al Diaz, who made significant contributions to the incredible first Space Shuttle mission to service and repair the Hubble Space Telescope.

If that were all Al Diaz accomplished in his NASA career, I would submit that would be enough for the record books.

But in the course of working over 40 years at the Agency, Al, the long-time leader of our Goddard Space Flight Center, and most recently our Associate Administrator for Space Science, is credited with leading the effort to place several Earth Observing Satellites in orbit that have proved vital in increasing our ability to predict the path and intensity of hurricanes, of helping us set our science agenda on the International Space Station, and of guiding NASA's overall program of exploring the planets of our solar system and discovering planets well beyond the horizon.

Young Hispanic engineers would do quite well to follow in the very formidable footprints of Al Diaz.

In closing, I am so pleased that HENAAC has chosen to honor one of NASA's greatest stars today. And Al, I thank you for your outstanding leadership, your dedication to your country and most of all for your friendship. Enjoy this tremendous honor my friend.